

factors of substituent atoms indicate flexibility of the 2'-O-MOE substituent in some cases.

[0068] Most of the 2'-O-MOE substituents display a *gauche* conformation around the C-C bond of the ethyl linker. However, in two cases, a *trans* conformation around the C-C bond is observed. The lattice interactions in the crystal include packing of duplexes against each other via their minor grooves. Therefore, for some residues, the conformation of the 2'-O-substituent is affected by contacts to an adjacent duplex. In general, variations in the conformation of the substituents (*e.g.* g^+ or g^- around the C-C bonds) create a range of interactions between substituents, both inter-strand, across the minor groove, and intra-strand. At one location, atoms of substituents from two residues are in van der Waals contact across the minor groove. Similarly, a close contact occurs between atoms of substituents from two adjacent intra-strand residues.

[0069] Previously determined crystal structures of A-DNA duplexes were for those that incorporated isolated 2'-O-methyl T residues. In the crystal structure noted above for the 2'-O-MOE substituents, a conserved hydration pattern has been observed for the 2'-O-MOE residues. A single water molecule is seen located between O2', O3' and the methoxy oxygen atom of the substituent, forming contacts to all three of between 2.9 and 3.4 Å. In addition, oxygen atoms of substituents are involved in several other hydrogen bonding contacts. For example, the methoxy oxygen atom of a particular 2'-O-substituent forms a hydrogen bond to N3 of an adenine from the opposite strand via a bridging water molecule.

[0070] In several cases a water molecule is trapped between the oxygen atoms O2', O3' and OC' of modified nucleosides. 2'-O-MOE substituents with *trans* conformation around the C-C bond of the ethylene glycol linker are associated with close contacts between OC' and N2 of a

guanosine from the opposite strand, and, water-mediated, between OC' and N3(G). When combined with the available thermodynamic data for duplexes containing 2'-O-MOE modified strands, this crystal structure allows for further detailed structure-stability analysis of other antisense modifications.

[0071] In extending the crystallographic structure studies, molecular modeling experiments were performed to study further enhanced binding affinity of oligonucleotides having 2'-O-modifications of the invention. The computer simulations were conducted on compounds of SEQ ID NO: 1, above, having 2'-O-modifications of the invention located at each of the nucleoside of the oligonucleotide. The simulations were performed with the oligonucleotide in aqueous solution using the AMBER force field method (Cornell *et al.*, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 1995, 117, 5179-5197)(modeling software package from UCSF, San Francisco, CA). The calculations were performed on an Indigo2 SGI machine (Silicon Graphics, Mountain View, CA).

[0072] Further 2'-O-modifications of the inventions include those having a ring structure that incorporates a two atom portion corresponding to the A' and B' atoms of Structure II. The ring structure is attached at the 2' position of a sugar moiety of one or more nucleosides that are incorporated into an oligonucleotide. The 2'-oxygen of the nucleoside links to a carbon atom corresponding to the A' atom of Structure II. These ring structures can be aliphatic, unsaturated aliphatic, aromatic or heterocyclic. A further atom of the ring (corresponding to the B' atom of Structure II), bears a further oxygen atom, or a sulfur or nitrogen atom. This oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen atom is bonded to one or more hydrogen atoms, alkyl moieties, or haloalkyl moieties, or is part of a further chemical moiety such as a ureido, carbamate, amide or amidine moiety. The

remainder of the ring structure restricts rotation about the bond joining these two ring atoms. This assists in positioning the "further oxygen, sulfur or nitrogen atom" (part of the R position as described above) such that the further atom can be located in close proximity to the 3'-oxygen atom (O3') of the nucleoside.

[0073] The ring structure can be further modified with a group useful for modifying the hydrophilic and hydrophobic properties of the ring to which it is attached and thus the properties of an oligonucleotide that includes the 2'-O-modifications of the invention. Further groups can be selected as groups capable of assuming a charged structure, e.g. an amine. This is particularly useful in modifying the overall charge of an oligonucleotide that includes a 2'-O-modifications of the invention. When an oligonucleotide is linked by charged phosphate groups, e.g. phosphorothioate or phosphodiester linkages, location of a counter ion on the 2'-O-modification, e.g. an amine functionality, locally neutralizes the charge in the local environment of the nucleotide bearing the 2'-O-modification. Such neutralization of charge will modulate uptake, cell localization and other pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic effects of the oligonucleotide.

[0074] Preferred ring structures of the invention for inclusion as a 2'-O modification include cyclohexyl, cyclopentyl and phenyl rings as well as heterocyclic rings having spacial footprints similar to cyclohexyl, cyclopentyl and phenyl rings. Particularly preferred 2'-O-substituent groups of the invention are listed below including an abbreviation for each:

2'-O-(trans 2-methoxy cyclohexyl) -- 2'-O-(TMCHL)

2'-O-(trans 2-methoxy cyclopentyl) -- 2'-O-(TMCPL)

2'-O-(trans 2-ureido cyclohexyl) -- 2'-O-(TUCHL)